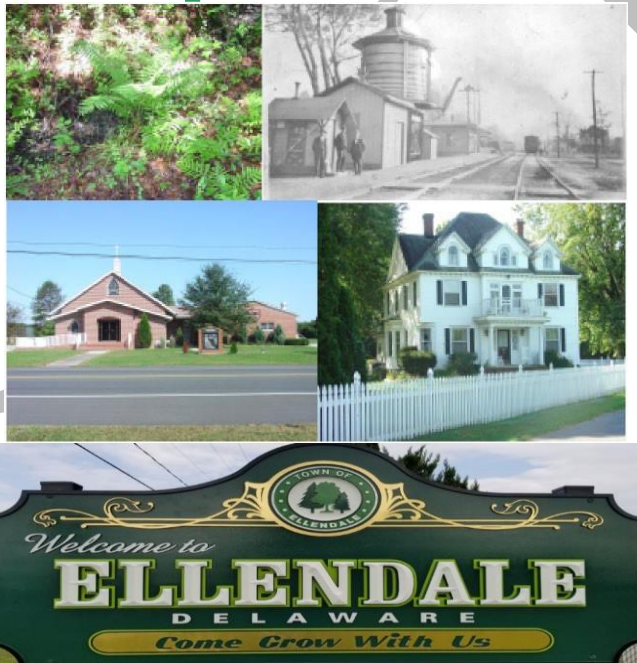


# Ellendale

## Come Grow With Us The 2020 Greater Ellendale Comprehensive Plan



Prepared for:

**THE TOWN OF ELLENDALE TOWN COUNCIL  
ELLENDALE, SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE**

**2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS**

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**Other Elements Prepared by:**

**Town Council**

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### ***ELLENDALE OF THE FOREST***

*A Jewel Within A Jewel*



Ellendale is a small jewel within Delaware, which Thomas Jefferson described as “a jewel among the States.” It has the “inherent value” which the Milford poet John Lofland wrote of when he said that “Delaware is like a diamond, diminutive, but having within it inherent value.” Within its unique natural and historic Sussex County setting, Ellendale is a Town of the Forest and a Bridge between Two Bays.

Ellendale is a green and rural gateway community at a major highway crossing. Located in the Ellendale and Redden Forests, the Town is centered on a historic railroad junction and village. It is also a land bridge that lies across the Peninsular Divide that both divides and connects the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay Estuary Watersheds. The Greater Ellendale Community includes vital community institutions and places within the Town and along Old State Road, at New Hope and New Market and along surrounding country roads. It encompasses countryside of great beauty and heritage, including the state forests, the famous Ellendale Swamp and Sussex County farmlands.

Ellendale is now experiencing more change than before, including a new Sussex County Sanitary Sewer District, surrounding population growth, increasing highway traffic on US 113 and DE Route 16, and positive new interest in development, conservation, preservation, and revitalization. The 2020 Greater Ellendale Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve the best of Ellendale as a country town and to address its past, present, and future as a small jewel of Delaware.

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### **The 2020 Town of Ellendale Comprehensive Plan**

**TOWN OF ELLENDALE, SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE  
RESOLUTION NUMBER 09-06  
BY THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ELLENDALE  
APPROVING AND ADOPTING BY RESOLUTION  
THE 2009 TOWN OF ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Title 22, Section 702 of the Delaware Code authorizes Delaware municipalities to prepare a Comprehensive Plan, for the purposes of encouraging the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and coordinating municipal growth, development and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties and the State;

WHEREAS, the Charter of the Town of Ellendale authorizes the Town Council to exercise its powers in the interest of good government and the safety, health, and public welfare of the Town, its inhabitants and affairs, including but not limited to the power to provide for and preserve the health, peace, safety, cleanliness, ornament, good order and public welfare;

WHEREAS, Delaware's Office of State Planning Coordination provides guidance to municipalities in order to effectuate the goal of having well-drawn and executed Comprehensive Plans for all Delaware counties and municipalities, including the provision that Comprehensive Plans be approved and certified by the Governor of the State of Delaware upon their completion, and further requires that certified Comprehensive Plans be revised on a five-year cycle;

WHEREAS, the Town of Ellendale's Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2004 and requires revision to account for physical changes and expansion which have since occurred in both the built and natural environments of the community;

WHEREAS, The Town of Ellendale Planning and Zoning Commission has prepared and approved, in consultation with the public, interested parties, and government agencies, a 2009 Comprehensive Plan for the Ellendale Area, including the Town of Ellendale and adjacent areas, which articulates an overall vision for the community's future, including goals, objectives, policies and recommendations for achieving that vision and has conducted a duly advertised public hearing for public review and comment on October 14, 2008, and recommends approval and adoption of The 2009 Town of Ellendale Comprehensive Plan by Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Ellendale;

WHEREAS, the 2020 Town of Ellendale Comprehensive Plan will be the foundation for revision or improvement of the Town's zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, housing codes, potential annexation plans and other implementation tools; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Ellendale held a duly advertised public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan on February 10, 2021.

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Ellendale, Sussex County, Delaware:

To serve as a guide for the purposes contained in Title 22, Section 701 of the Delaware Code and the Charter of the Town of Ellendale, specified above, the 2020 Town of Ellendale Comprehensive Plan is hereby approved and adopted and made effective as the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Ellendale, superseding all previous Plans, pending certification by the Governor, on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

ATTEST:

TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF  
ELLENDALE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tamara Skis  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly Hughes  
President of the Town of Ellendale

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### The Legal Basis of the Comprehensive Plan

In Delaware, Title 22, Chapter 7, Section 702, of the Delaware Code identifies the requirements for the Comprehensive Plan:

**§ 702. Comprehensive development plan.**

(a) A planning commission established by any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate. It is the purpose of this section to encourage the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and the coordination of municipal growth, development and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties and the State through a process of municipal comprehensive planning.

(b) Comprehensive plan means a document in text and maps, containing at a minimum, a **municipal development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction's position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues.** The comprehensive planning process shall demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county and the State during plan preparation. The comprehensive plan for municipalities of greater than 2,000 population shall also contain, as appropriate to the size and character of the jurisdiction, a description of the physical, demographic and economic conditions of the jurisdiction; as well as policies, statements, goals and planning components for public and private uses of land, transportation, economic development, affordable housing, community facilities, open spaces and recreation, protection of sensitive areas, community design, adequate water and wastewater systems, protection of historic and cultural resources, annexation and such other elements which in accordance with present and future needs, in the judgment of the municipality, best promotes the health, safety, prosperity and general public welfare of the jurisdiction's residents.

(c) The comprehensive plan shall be the basis for the development of zoning regulations as permitted pursuant to Chapter 3 of this title. Should a jurisdiction exercise its authority to establish municipal zoning regulations pursuant to Chapter 3 of this title, it shall, within 18 months of the adoption of a comprehensive development plan or revision thereof, amend its official zoning map to rezone all lands within the municipality in accordance with the uses of land provided for in the comprehensive development plan.

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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(d) After a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance to this chapter, the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan.

(e) At least every 5 years a municipality shall review its adopted comprehensive plan to determine if its provisions are still relevant given changing conditions in the municipality or in the surrounding areas. The adopted comprehensive plan shall be revised, updated and amended as necessary, and re-adopted at least every 10 years.

(f) The comprehensive plan or amendments or revisions thereto shall be submitted to the Governor or designee at such time as the plan is made available for public review. The municipality shall provide sufficient copies for review by the Governor's Advisory Council on Planning Coordination. The Advisory Council, within 30 days of plan submission, shall conduct a public meeting, at which time the municipality shall make a presentation of the plan and its underlying goals and development policies, except when the Advisory Council determines that the comprehensive plan, amendments or revisions are fully consistent with statewide land development goals, policies and criteria as adopted by the Governor or Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues. Following the public meeting the plan shall be subject to the state review and certification process set forth in § 9103 of Title 29. If the Advisory Council determines that a public meeting is not required as provided above, the plan shall be submitted directly to the Governor or his or her designee for certification provided in § 9103 of Title 29.

Delaware requires that local Comprehensive Plans be certified by the Governor after review by state agencies. Also, as a result of Delaware's passage of House Bill 255 in 2001, the Comprehensive Plan will play a significant role in decisions pertaining to town growth and annexation. House Bill 255 requires that in order to be eligible for future annexation, a property must be identified as such in a municipality's adopted, and state- certified, Comprehensive Plan.

Priorities of the Plan are to help strengthen Ellendale's neighborhoods and community institutions, its physical environment and economic development in the form of attractive, planned new commercial and business development.

The process of developing the Plan begins with interviewing community leaders and public agencies, researching community history, reviewing Supporting Plans and studies, developing an inventory of existing conditions, preparing descriptions of existing and currently proposed development projects, gathering community input, developing a vision and goals, drafting policy statements in each topical area of the plan and preparing an implantation plan.

## **THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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### **Severability Clause**

Should a court decide that any section or provision of this comprehensive land use plan is unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of this comprehensive land use plan as a whole or any part other than the part judged unconstitutional or invalid.

DRAFT

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### THE GREENBELT OF ELLENDALE



#### **The Ellendale Swamp**

The natural Greenbelt of Ellendale is focused on the great Ellendale Swamp, the Ellendale and Redden State Forests and the farms and lands that surround the Town. The surviving tracks and right-of-way of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Queen Anne's Railway run from the Swamp to Milton. The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, the Delaware Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, The Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation, The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and others are actively working for conservation in the Ellendale area. Through partnerships with these agencies, the Town and Community of Ellendale can make itself one of Delaware's leading places for hunting, ecotourism, enjoyment of nature, hiking, biking, nature tours and conservation. The Comprehensive Plan foresees the day when a new Queen Anne's Railway Greenway Trail will be created, connecting with a Railroad Square trailhead in the heart of the village, with the Ellendale Swamp, and with historic Milton as a bright new link in the Atlantic-to-Pacific American Discovery Trail.



## **ELLENDALE'S RAILROAD SQUARE**

### **The Heart of a Railroad Village**



Looking North -The Train Station is on the Left

Collection of Fire Chief Rowland Moore

Ellendale's Railroad Square was a major rail junction and a beehive of economic activity in Sussex County. The first section of the Junction and Breakwater Railroad from Harrington to Milford was completed in 1859. In March 1860, the Company's Survey Team, consisting of T.F. Tilghman as chief engineer, 1 surveyor, 1 rodman, 2 chainmen and 4 axemen, worked south through forest and farmland from Milford to Georgetown. This portion of the tracks would parallel the Federalist-era "Old State Road" to the west. Construction of the railroad south of Milford was delayed by the Civil War and did not begin until 1867. By 1869 the line was completed through Ellendale and Georgetown to Lewes. It was extended from there to Rehoboth in 1878. There were 14 stations and regular passenger, mail, and freight service on the 44-mile line from Harrington to Rehoboth. Through its junctions, the J. & B. was a part of the first rail network to serve all three Delmarva states – Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. In the 1890s the Queen Anne's Railroad was built from Love Point and Queenstown on Chesapeake Bay through Ellendale to Milton and Lewes on Delaware Bay. Connections were made with steamboats crossing the Chesapeake to Baltimore and the Delaware to Cape May. Around this square and the rail siding to the north were a watch box, pump house, water tower, 2 stations, stores, a Cannery, the Ellendale Excelsior Company and the R. J. Clendaniel Sawmill. The Town of Ellendale was incorporated in 1905. In 1916 the DuPont Boulevard, now US 113, was built a mile to the west.

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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2. Environmental Features
3. Existing Land Use
4. Future Land Use
5. Future Land Use and Surrounding Areas
6. Growth and Annexation Areas
7. Delaware Strategies for Policies and Spending
8. Transportation
9. Zoning Map

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### *Introduction*

The 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (The Plan) documents the progress made toward the Ellendale's 2009 land use goals and strategies, its proposed zoning, and presents and updated vision and plan for land use and annexation over the next five years 2020 to 2025. The Plan sections which have been updated or added include:

Population and Housing	Town Infrastructure
Vision of Ellendale's Future	Transportation
Objectives	Economic Development
Public Participation	Land Use and Zoning Ordinances
Town Services	Annexation Plan
Drainage and Storm Water	Forest Lands Impacts
Historical / Cultural Resources	Intergovernmental Cooperation

In addition to an amended and reformatted text, the Plan's map suite has been updated. Additional zoning districts are proposed within this plan will be amended in the Town's zoning ordinance within 18 months of the adoption and certification of the Plan.

The Town continues to expand its "Greater Ellendale Area." The Greater Ellendale Area is an informal term used to define the Town's continued efforts to work with other jurisdictions and with landowners to address the impacts of growth, the maintenance of sewer and water infrastructure, and impacts of growth on preserved lands. More importantly, this effort works to assist local residents in and adjacent to the community to work through the Town's annexation process to obtain viable water and sewer services to either develop their property or remediate a failing septic or well. Many of the residents are customers of the Town's combined sewer district and continue to want clean drinking water for the Town. Based upon comments provided through various public forums, residents wish to continue improving the community, expanding services and allowing for growth to further expand the prosperity of Ellendale.

Important elements in realizing Ellendale's future which were identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and have been addressed by the Town are listed below:

**1. "The Town should amend the zoning and subdivision code and should formally adopt into zoning the proposed zoning map of 2009."**

The Town over the past several years has reviewed and addressed concerns with existing zoning code while adopting a new subdivision code and creating and implementing a new annexation policy and procedure. The Town also formally adopted through ordinance the proposed zoning map of 2009 as the official zoning map for the Town.

**2. "The Town should perform a sub-regional planning effort for those lands west of US 113 in the 2004 future annexation areas as defined within the Comprehensive Plan."**

In November of 2008, the Town through its consultant performed an evaluation of the

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

impacts upon the community, the environment, and adjacent jurisdictions on the impact of annexation of lands west of US 113 and found the proposed future annexation to be contentious at this time. As a result, of that exercise, the Town has chosen instead to work on the required 5-year comprehensive plan update to balance everyone's concerns while working to meet the needs of the local community.

Despite these many successes for a Town of less than 200, there is still work to be done to continue to assist the residents of Ellendale. Several of these items are:

**3. "The Town should review and identify new funding sources for the community and expand the economic development opportunities for the community."**

The Town -- like many other small communities in Sussex that did not experience the recent development boom -- struggles to provide the very basic of services. As part of the implementation of this update, the Town will work to partner with the County and State to identify new revenue sources to support the basic functions of Town government while working to create economic development opportunities to support local incubator business to support the ever-growing resort communities of Sussex County.

**4. "The Town should review and amend its Charter as needed."**

The Charter of Ellendale is a living document and should be reviewed continually to meet the needs of the community.

These key elements -- whether finished or unfinished requiring continuing work -- represent much of the Town's land use policies and support its vision to remain a small-town supporting a variety of housing types with a modest mix of commercial and industrial land use activities to support the needs of the community. Future land use and annexation plans presented in this update will build upon these key elements. This update will also demonstrate the Town's continued commitment to work with the County, State and other local jurisdictions to further implement the smart growth principles of Delaware into land use practices.

**5. "The Town should continue to review and amend the zoning and subdivision code and should formally adopt into zoning the proposed future land use map of 2009."**

The Town over the past several years has reviewed and addressed concerns with existing zoning code while adopting a new subdivision code and creating and implementing a new annexation policy and procedure. The Town also formally adopted through ordinance the proposed zoning map of 2004 as the official zoning map for the Town. As the Town experiences new challenges, the Town should review and amend its current zoning and subdivision code to meet the needs of the community.

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### *Ellendale's Past*

**Ellendale** was founded in the early 1800s and incorporated in 1905. The town was first settled by a few families near the intersection of Old State Road and Del. 16. It was named after the daughter of Alfred Short, a Whig Republican elected to the state legislature in 1852. The town's current site was established in 1866 when the group migrated east to settle around the Junction & Breakwater Railroad depot.

### *Ellendale's Present*

Ellendale is a green and rural gateway community located along a major highway crossing. Map 1: Aerial View shows the area of the incorporated Town, showing current municipal boundaries, waterways, ditches, parcels, roads, railroads, existing forested lands, and urban conditions superimposed over a 2007 orthographic photograph of the area. Located in the Ellendale and Redden Forests, the Town is centered on a historic railroad junction and village. It is also a land bridge that lies across the Peninsular Divide that both divides and connects the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay Estuary Watersheds. The Greater Ellendale Community includes vital community institutions and places within the Town and along Old State Road, at New Hope and New Market and along surrounding country roads. It encompasses countryside of great beauty and heritage, including the state forests, the famous Ellendale Swamp and Sussex County farmlands.

The Town of Ellendale currently has a population of approximately 436 residents. \* Ellendale's municipal street mileage is 3.79 miles, which include Willow Street and State Street. The Town also maintains a small fenced in Town Park located on Willow Street directly behind the Town Hall. Ellendale's housing consists mainly of single-family dwellings with newer developments creating multifamily housing units. Ellendale currently has one of the higher poverty rates of Sussex County at 16.9%. The Town is trying to expand with the existing operational staff to prepare for the upcoming growth.

### **Town of Ellendale**

Population Demographics*	Number		
Total population	436 estimated	Race	Population
Female	232	White	285
Male	204	Black or African American	130
Under 5 years old	31	Some Other Race	11

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

5 to 17 years	73	Two or More Races	6
18 to 24 years	26		
25 to 34 years	59		
35 to 44 years	50		
45 to 54 years	34		
55 to 59 years	29		
60 to 64 years	22		
65 to 74 years	24		
Over 75 years	36		
<b>Median age (years)</b>	37		

**\*Sources:**

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sussexcountydelaware>

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/ellendale-de-population>

<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/ellendale-de>

### *Ellendale's Future*

The Town of Ellendale's vision for its future continues to be that of a largely residential community, with local business centrally located along Milton / Ellendale Highway (DE Route 16) and larger retailers located along the US Route 113 corridor. This vision has been expanded and built upon since the 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

DelDOT has launched the Coastal Corridors, 404 and Beyond Study which will explore the traffic crossing from the western part of Sussex County and continuing to our coastal areas. This will include Route 16 which is also scheduled to have construction of a Grade Separated Intersection installed at Route 113. Because of these projects, Ellendale will need to focus on Preservation, Progress and Growth in the coming years.

### **Table 4 Revised Population Projections for the Town of Ellendale**

(Sources: Delaware Population Consortium Annual Population Projections)

Similarly, within Town the number of households is expected to increase by 10% from 113 units in 2000 to 126 units. However, the housing has kept pace with the current slow trend in population growth and the number of new homes has increased by 7 units bringing the total number of homes to 120 units. These new homes are first time buyers.



## **THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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The Town recognizes and appreciates the need for affordable housing and continues to address that need through cooperative agreements with Sussex County and through revisions to local zoning codes. Over the next decade the Town's population is predicted to be at or about the same pace. The demand for work force housing has placed unexpected pressure on the community, and if the proposed new growth occurs within the next five years, then the population of Ellendale could mushroom to over 3,400 residents.

The Town of Ellendale anticipates continuous growth that will nearly quadruple in its current size within the next five to ten (5-10) years. The Town anticipated this growth with the previous annexation of Ingram Village and the future potential annexations along South Old State Road and moving westward along Beach Highway (Del. 16) towards U.S. 113. However, with the sluggish housing market over the past five (5) years, the growth the Town has experienced, in both the older part of Ellendale proper and the new development, Ingram Village, is encouraging and exciting. As housing grows in Ellendale and with the anticipated water system being built just outside of town limits, the Town is hopeful not only for housing and population growth, but economic and business growth as well.

### ***Preserving Our Heritage***

Preserving and enhancing the History of the community:

- Preserve Ellendale's small-town atmosphere and working-class heritage.
- Promote familiarity and friendliness among neighbors and new residents continuing the Town's tradition as a family-friendly, safe and affordable community.

### ***Encouraging Progress***

Promote improvements and development to enhance the quality of life for residents:

- Add new stores and businesses within Town center.
- Renovate and make improvements to older homes.
- Maintain forest resources.
- Build upon and maintain existing park.
- Improve infrastructure such as water and wastewater.
- Prepare for future growth and ensure it fits local character.

### ***Imagining the Future***

- The Town will have a vibrant downtown with mixed uses that provides services to all aspects of the community.
- The Town has completed phase 2 of its sidewalk program and will continue to evaluate the need for sidewalks and multi-use paths as well as improve streets to enhance a sense of community.

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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### *Principles*

Specific principles which residents in attendance at the various meetings felt should guide the future of Ellendale include:

- Expand prosperity through innovation, efficiency, and education.
- Expand the ideals of cooperation and share responsibility throughout the community.
- Pedestrian friendly neighborhoods with sidewalks or walking paths.
- Vibrant and well-defined commercial and historical districts.
- Keep the community predominantly residential.
- Create more open space and better connections to existing open space.

### *Discussion and Public Outreach*

During the 2019-2020 public meetings and outreach to State and County agencies, participants expressed an interest in continuing the discussion as a strategy for realizing the vision for Ellendale's future. Questions raised during these meetings demonstrated a genuine interest in continued discussion and commitment to actively manage community growth. The town will conduct ongoing outreach to help the community identify and assist with this growth. This will include online polling, door to door communications and special events within the town.

The Town of Ellendale also conducted a series of meetings with residents and state and county agencies during 2019-2020. These meetings assessed the Town's existing resources from municipal, community and business perspectives, and used these findings to develop a framework for growth in and around the Town.

### *Intergovernmental Cooperation*

The Town appreciates the importance of cooperation and partnerships to develop and implement this comprehensive plan. Recognizing the need to cooperate with the State, County and other local jurisdictions, the Town has considered the following documents:

[State Strategies for Policies and Spending, 2020](#) which the Governor signed Executive Order 42 adopting the new State Strategies for Policies and Spending (SSPS) Map, and accompanying text, for Delaware on July 23, 2020. This map contains important changes. It depicts the Greater Ellendale Area in the following manner:

- (1) The area within the current Town boundaries is shown as a Level 2\* Investment Area with the exception of the far southeast corner of the Town, south of Willow Street and east of East Railroad Avenue, which is shown as a Level 3 Investment Area.
- (2) The Area north of SR 16 and between US 113 and Old State Road (SR 213) is shown partly as a Level 2 Investment Area, partly as a Level 3 Investment Area, and partly as a Level 4 Investment Area.
- (3) The Area along Sharon Road between SR 16 and US 113 and Walker's Acres are shown as Level 2 Investment Areas.
- (4) The Area along both sides of Old State Road (SR 213) reaching south from SR 16

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- to just north of Out Home Road is shown as a Level 2 Investment Area.
- (5) Smaller sub-areas on Hummingbird Road, Ponder Road and between Reynolds Pond Road and SR 16 are shown as Level 2 Investment Areas.
  - (6) The remainder of the Study Area is shown as a Level 3\*\* Investment Area.
  - (7) Ellendale and Redden State Forest parcels are shown as “Out of Play.”

\* Level 2 - Areas can be composed of less developed areas **within municipalities**, rapidly growing areas in the counties that have or will have public water and wastewater services and utilities, areas that are generally adjacent to or near Investment Level 1 Areas, smaller towns and rural villages that should grow consistently with their historic character, and suburban areas with public water, wastewater, and utility services

\*\* Level 3- Areas generally fall into two categories. The first category covers lands that are in the **long-term growth plans of counties or municipalities** where development is not necessary to accommodate expected population growth during this five-year planning period (or longer). In these instances, development in Investment Level 3 may be least appropriate for new growth and development in the near term. The second category includes lands that are adjacent to or intermingled with fast-growing areas within counties or municipalities that are otherwise categorized as Investment Levels 1 or 2.

**Sussex County Comprehensive Plan Update 2018** was finalized and adopted in March 2019.

Sussex County Comprehensive Plan Update was developed in accordance with State requirements. Sussex County strongly favors directing development towards the municipalities that desire it. With exceptions, these are some of the County’s most densely developed areas and are most fully served by public sewer and public water facilities.

The County and State recognize that planning and zoning decisions around the municipalities will have impacts on the economy and the quality of life within the municipalities.

1. The specific permitted uses and densities governing new construction within an incorporated municipality will continue to be governed by that municipality’s zoning ordinance, its public water and sewer capacities, and its comprehensive planning policies.
2. Town Center - Significant growth is proposed to be concentrated around municipalities in unincorporated areas just beyond municipal borders. Many of these locations are part of areas that municipalities have formally designated as future annexation areas in their local comprehensive plans, where the municipality would be receptive to annexation requests in the future. Some municipalities have policies that they avoid extending public water and sewage systems beyond their borders, while other municipalities do allow these extensions.
3. Growth Areas – Municipalities; Development within the municipalities will be in accordance with their own zoning and subdivision regulations. To further intergovernmental coordination within Sussex County, areas surrounding the County’s municipalities have been defined for the purpose of establishing an Intergovernmental Coordination Zone of mutual planning and development concern(s). This boundary will

## THE 2020 GREATER ELLENDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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be utilized for the intergovernmental coordination of future planning, zoning, subdivision, and related land development decisions, including Municipal annexation.

- The Town of Ellendale will work with state agencies and others to support development and growth.
- Encourage partnering with neighboring municipalities for large scale initiatives within the County.
- Develop strategies for planning in conjunction with DelDOT regarding Routes 113 and 16.
- Participate in studies and other planning tools in order to provide feedback to decisionmakers regarding the Town's own planning initiatives.

Additionally, to ensure the implementation of these planning documents as well as other shared efforts, the Town will consider the following:

- Develop new partnerships for cooperation and coordination with nearby local governments and communities (such as Milford, unincorporated Lincoln, Milton, Greenwood and Georgetown) and continued cooperation with Sussex County government.
- Work closely with Delaware State agencies like the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC), the Delaware Economic Development Authority, DNREC and DelDOT in advancing Ellendale's vision.
- Explore service consolidation and sharing arrangements with Sussex County where the municipality receives the most benefit. The Sussex County Ellendale Sanitary Sewer District, and its relationship for a potential Ellendale Public Water System.
- Work with regional entities such as area institutions of learning like the University of Delaware, Del Tech, Sussex Tech, Milford School District, and others on initiatives of mutual interest, most likely involving the environment, transportation, and the planned growth of a small municipality.
- Promote the appreciation, improvement and protection of the Ellendale Historic Area in concert with Sussex County's Southern Delaware Tourism Program and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office.
- Develop a Town 5-Year Capital Improvement Program (C.I.P) coordinated with the C.I.P. program of Sussex County and that of DelDOT.
- Develop the Town's computer system capabilities, hardware, and software in order to put into daily use the GIS – Geographical Information Systems mapping and database which has been prepared as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Request improvements to the GIS layers and systems from Sussex County and DelDOT regarding mapping capabilities.

### *Objectives of Plan*

The Town of Ellendale Comprehensive Plan continues to realize its residents' vision for the Town's future and align with the 2020 Office of State Planning's State Strategies for Managing Growth in Delaware:

- Focus on re-development of the community through Community Development

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Block Grant monies and other state and county funding possibilities.

- Encourage a mix of housing types. These types should include all newer styles including Tiny homes, Agri-hoods and any other self-sustaining communities that are available.
- Preserve and promote historic resources in the Town.
- Maintain land uses that are consistent with zoning and community character.
- Promote walking-oriented community with a variety of pathways and sidewalks for residents.
- Integrating new development into the community while improving water and wastewater services to existing and new residents.
- Support agricultural and environmental preservation by implementing better design criteria that encourages the clustering of homes into a town like setting.

The overall goal of this comprehensive plan update is to support efforts identified by the State and County that encourage growth to occur in a planned fashion and provide for growth in a fiscally responsible manner that protects cultural and environmental resources.

The Town of Ellendale continues to work with the Office of State Planning and Coordination (OSPC) and its Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) process to promote cooperative planning as the Town updates its Comprehensive Plan. The PLUS process allows for State agencies to review and comment on the proposed plan and any possible future updates or amendments.

Residents may find more information on the Office of State Planning's PLUS Dashboard: <http://www.stateplanning.delaware.gov/plus/>

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### *Housing*

To address gaps in income and affordable housing, the Town has considered and will continue to develop the following strategies:

- To participate in the Sussex County Moderately Priced Housing Program and review the working contractual agreement between the County and Town as well as State Agencies and the Town on an annual basis.
- Review existing subdivision code to allow for mixed-use design to provide a variety of housing product types within the community. These types should include all newer styles including Tiny homes, Agri-hoods and any other self-sustaining communities that are available.
- Review existing land uses and encourage redevelopment of sites for new housing as well as new employers to promote the concept of Ellendale as a place to “live and work.”
- Town will develop new methods of rehabilitating older Ellendale residential areas and building new ones. The objective of the Housing Element is to ensure an adequate, diverse supply of safe, decent, affordable and well-designed homes for ownership and rental to both present and future residents.
- Emphasize good community design, planned open space, a variety of lot and house sizes, access to transportation including public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, measures to ensure housing affordability and densities which preserve the natural features of surrounding landscapes.
- Focus on housing improvements and rehabilitation in all neighborhoods of Ellendale This can best be achieved by pursuing town-wide improvements in code development and enforcement.
- Vacant infill sites should be identified for redevelopment with appropriate home ownership and rental housing.
- Redevelop vacant sites with new developer-built home ownership homes, using the home ownership counseling services of the First State Community Action Agency and NCALL and others. Supplement this effort with street, sidewalk, and streetscape improvements as appropriate.
- Make creative use of Community Development Block Grant and housing rehabilitation funds to improve housing conditions where they are most severely distressed.
- The Town should allow accessory apartment units in residential districts in its Zoning Code. The Code should reference style, height restrictions if any and location specific zoning.
- The Town should encourage housing designs with roof pitches and eave dimensions consistent with Ellendale's traditional architectural styles.
- Encourage the development of innovative, well-designed Senior Retirement Housing in Ellendale, as close to the Town Center as possible.
- Promote Ellendale as a community for artist’s studios and living units, on sites in or close to the Town Center.

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- Address housing rehabilitation needs throughout the Study Area with housing rehabilitation incentives coordinated between the Town of Ellendale, the Sussex County Community Development and Housing Division and the Delaware State Housing Authority.
- Encourage innovative subdivision and housing designs by upgrading the Town's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and housing code allow cluster development, encouragement of mixed-use development and street tree planting.
- Recognize the Town's historic housing stock as its single greatest asset for the future.
- Develop an active housing fix-up, reinvestment, rehabilitation, and new development effort including both owner-occupied and rental housing.
- Strongly limit conversions of single-family homes to multi-family units or commercial uses
- Identify and promote new residential development areas with low-density, well designed housing types suited for Ellendale
- In new housing developments, seek to implement the Smart Growth design principles to give guidance to developers to use a clustered design for new subdivisions, where living units are concentrated in the portion of the site most suitable for development, and the remainder of the site left open for conservation and recreation. Encourage green design.

### **Town Services**

#### **Government**

The Town currently is a part-time government run mostly by the good will of its citizens. The Town currently provides for a part-time code enforcement officer; however, the Town should develop a plan for future municipal services and revenues, seeking help from experienced Town Management professionals. New services which should be planned for the addition of a part- or full-time Town Manager, Town Clerk or Office Manager; the addition of Trash Removal services and budgeting which can allow for small annual capital improvement projects to the Town Park or other facilities.

#### **Ellendale Volunteer Fire Company – Emergency Medical Services**

The Town of Ellendale continues to support the efforts of the local Ellendale Volunteer Fire Company. Whether it is the company's ambulance or fire response service, or the educational outreach provided to the community, the organization continues to provide a valuable service to the Greater Ellendale Area. Since the update of this comprehensive plan the company still maintains its existing facility in downtown Ellendale and has update much of its response equipment to meet the needs of the changing community. However, as the population continues to grow within the area, the company is faced with new and continued challenges.

Like many volunteer companies, the Ellendale Volunteer Fire Company is experiencing a shortage of financial resources and qualified volunteer staff; as the Town population grows and ages, these potential shortages will threaten the company's ability to

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continue to provide basic ambulance and fire response services. The Town is committed to continue working with its local emergency response partner to address these concerns and work to meet the short and long-term goals of the company.

- The town will explore ways to encourage volunteers to move to Ellendale as part of their participation with the fire company
- The town will work with the Fire Company to promote fundraising activities within the area in order to support the efforts of our volunteers.

### **Ellendale Police Department**

Despite financial limitations, the Town continues to employ a part-time police officer to assist local residents. Since the last update of this comprehensive land use plan, the Town has struggled to maintain the police department and at one point had no officers in service. The Town continues to look to residents for direction on maintaining and improving this resource.

- The Town will consider a Private Public Partnership which would enable a contract to be established with a security force should one be deemed necessary in order to support law enforcement.
- The Town will explore opportunities for young person focused programs to encourage community-based enforcement with fun activities and educational resources and hopes that future growth may provide additional resources for the return of a full-time officer.
- The Town works closely with the Delaware State Police, Georgetown Troop 7 to address concerns outside of Town and to provide service when the Ellendale Police Department is unable to respond.

### **Schools**

Students from the Greater Ellendale Area attend schools in the Milford School District, the Indian River School District or the Cape Henlopen School Districts. Currently, these districts are able to continue to support the needs of local students. Should the Town experience more growth, a study should be done to determine the need for an elementary school within the Town limits for the Milford School District.

### **Library Services**

The Town recognizes the importance of a library to the community and the services it provides to local residents. The Town currently does not have a local library; however, residents have access to the public libraries in Milford, Greenwood, Georgetown, and Milton. In addition, the Sussex County Book Mobile visits the Town twice a week for several hours. The Town will continue to support the efforts of these community libraries as well as those efforts of Sussex County Government to provide the many services offered through a local library system.

- The town will reach out to Milford and Bridgeville Libraries to explore opportunities for their youth to attend programming.
- Local lending libraries can be installed in locations approved by the Town.



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### Parks

The Town maintains the community's existing public park which provides playgrounds, field, and a pavilion for residents to use. However, the Town desires more parks and open space for residents. The Town wishes to work with future development projects, the County, and the State to ensure a variety of open space within the community that offers both passive and active recreation activities. These may include activities identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Highlights of this plan for the community of Ellendale include the addition of trails, sidewalks, and multi-use paths.

#### Additional Outdoor Recreation Needs/Priorities

##### High facility needs:

Public Swimming Pools
Public Dog Park
Fishing Areas
Open Space and Passive Recreation Areas
Picnic Areas
Playgrounds
Hiking Trails

##### Moderate Facility Needs:

Access for Boating (canoe, kayak, and powerboat)
Public Golf Courses
Campgrounds
Baseball/Softball Fields
Horseshoe Pits
Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts

The Town of Ellendale will continue to work toward including and/or continuing to offer some of these opportunities in the development of their Comprehensive Plan. The Town has already received support from DelDOT regarding a Rail Trail along Route 16 and the railroad with possible connection in Milton. The Town will continue to reach out to DelDOT regarding this and other potential walking/biking trail options within and around the Town.

### Town Infrastructure

#### Water and Sewer

The Town of Ellendale will continue to work with Sussex County to expand the current water and sewer system service to its residents.

#### Storm Water Management

The Greater Ellendale Area is not without its drainage problems and concerns. The Town relies on the many tax ditches within and around the Town which provide drainage and minimize potential localized flooding issues. Residents recognize the need to maintain these features which minimize storm water impacts on the area. To ensure the long-term function of this green infrastructure, the Town acknowledges the need to perform the following:

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- Continue to partner and support the efforts of the DNREC Drainage and Storm Water Section, Sussex Conservation District, and the local Tax Ditch Association to maintain tax ditch rights-of-way, perform needed maintenance and maintain any manmade structures within these ditches.
- Participate with DNREC Drainage and Storm Water Section, Sussex County Government, and other local jurisdictions in a regional storm water assessment to evaluate for necessary improvements to lessen flooding potential within and surrounding Ellendale.
- As the community continues to review and revise its local zoning codes and regulations, it should consider the need to provide for drainage and storm water concerns in the future land use areas identified in this update. The Town should consider regulations that allow for and encourage green technologies as well as conservation design standards which protect existing tax ditch rights-of-way within these areas.

### Source Water Protection

The protection of ground water and surface water continues to be a concern to the Community, especially an area located outside of Town limits, to the South on Old State Road, known as New Hope Road. Residents in this area are in desperate need of a water system. Sussex County has developed and passed a water system for that area, which will include a few of our in-town lots as it comes North on Old State Road. Construction has not yet started but will soon. The Town recognizes that this finite resource is vital to residential health, population growth, and future development in Ellendale. Because the Town's current population is under the threshold of 2000 persons, the Town has not formally created a Source Water Protection Ordinance as required by Delaware Code. However, as demands for water services increase from local residents (both existing and future development), the need to protect this resource whether provided by the Town or a private company will become more urgent.

As the Town considers growth in the Greater Ellendale Area, the Town should continue consideration of how future development will impact soils within the community. Soils are invaluable to provision and protection of our drinking water. In the Town's proposed future growth zones, there are several excellent and good recharge areas. These areas are defined to have superior abilities to allow for water to quickly enter the soil and move downward allowing for the replenishment of local aquifers. As parcels in and adjacent to the Town develop, the Town should consider the following strategies to ensure protection of this important resource:

- The Town should encourage better design to allow for cluster development which allows for additional open space requirements to allow water to enter and recharge the local aquifers.
- Develop and review zoning standards that limit the number of impervious surfaces that prevent water from returning to the local aquifers.
- Encourage the planting of trees and other landscaping features to lessen water run-off from the site and retain water for future absorption into the aquifer system.

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- Once the Town's population exceeds 1000 persons, the Town should partner with DNREC to develop a local Source Water Protection Ordinance as required by Delaware Code.
- The Town should partner with Sussex County and private water providers to perform necessary water resources evaluation reports / assessments to determine water needs and impacts in the existing community and future annexation areas.

### *Transportation*

**Map 1** (Transportation) identifies Ellendale's highways, streets, railroad lines and waterways. The map identifies streets by functional classification, including US highways and local roads.

### *US 113 Corridor Preservation Program*

The Town continues to support the US 113 Corridor Capacity Preservation Program. More information about the Program and how it can be utilized to manage growth along the Route 113 Corridor can be found here:

[https://deldot.gov/Publications/manuals/corr\\_cap/pdfs/deldot\\_ccpp\\_manual.pdf](https://deldot.gov/Publications/manuals/corr_cap/pdfs/deldot_ccpp_manual.pdf)

To support the Delaware Department of Transportation's (DelDOT) efforts, the Town participated in the US 113 North/South Study for the Ellendale Area. Town staff and residents participated in a series of workshops which identified necessary improvements to US 113 and Delaware Route 16.

The Town recognizes the importance of upcoming projects such as the Grade Separated Intersection at Route 13 and Route 16, the Coastal Corridors, 404 and Beyond Study which will examine traffic crossing Sussex County via Route 16 as well as the impacts that large projects may have on the community. The Town will continue to work with DelDOT as projects move forward to address concerns raised by the community, residents from within the Ellendale area, and the State.

Additionally, the Town would like to request more information on retaining the property not utilized for the US 113/Route 16 Grade Separated Intersection as a means to expand the Town's municipal boundary to the west.

### *Delaware Route 16 and other Local Roads*

Delaware Route 16, which is a State Maintained roadway, serves as both a major east/west corridor for seasonal resort traffic as well as the main street for the Town of Ellendale. The Town will continue to work with DelDOT on the upcoming projects and studies and explore options for growth, including service road access off RT 16 as well as pedestrian and bike facilities within the town limits.

Additionally, the Town continues to work with DelDOT and Delaware State Police to address both safety and maintenance concerns. As part of this comprehensive plan update, the Town wishes to expand this partnership to consider a traffic calming project to ensure pedestrian safety, while further improving the appearance of the community. This would include expanded sidewalks, landscaping, and trees to beautify the community while improving public safety.

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In addition to Delaware Route 16, the Town has many roads and alleys in the downtown commercial area and residential neighborhoods in need of maintenance and upgrades. Ellendale will continue to apply for funding sources for maintenance of its downtown roads through DelDOT's Municipal Street Aid program.

### *The Norfolk & Southern Railroad*

Rail transport is now and has been key in Ellendale. The Norfolk-Southern railroad company operates the main north-south rail line from Milford to the Maryland Line. The Delaware Rail Administration, a subsidiary of DelDOT, owns the former Queen Anne's Railway, now called the "Milton Industrial Track," between Ellendale and Milton. This State-owned rail right-of-way to Milton offers a splendid potential for a Greenway hiking and biking trail, either in the form of a "Rails-with-Trails" or a "Rails-to-Trails" a project. An independent short-line railroad company uses the Queen Anne's line and the Ellendale rail siding for freight car storage. It should be possible to preserve this valuable railroad use in tandem with a unique Greenway project. The line could also be used for scenic rail tour excursions in the future, perhaps in conjunction with scenic tours on the rail line between Ellendale and Milton.

Norfolk & Southern Railroad uses the one-track north-south line for approximately four freight trains per day, Monday through Saturday. There are sometimes additional freight runs. The freight trains carry bulk cargo between the Harrington Yards, Frankford and Indian River. Recently, the Milton International Line has been reestablished and carries oil and gas cars to Baker Petroleum in Milton. The Railroad line is currently being upgraded with all new tracks.

### *Pedestrian Friendly Community*

There are transportation needs for bicycling and hiking trails, including connections throughout the community and County.

Currently, DelDOT's DART public transit Route 303 runs between Milford, Ellendale, Lincoln, Milton, Dover, Frederica, Magnolia and Georgetown. In Ellendale, DART Route 303 traverses Old State Road south to a turnaround at the Philadelphia Holiness Pentecostal Church and then along Route 16 to Milton and Georgetown with four (4) bus stops between Old State Road, Main Street and Ponder Avenue.

DelDOT continues to develop new statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans that will offer opportunities for Ellendale and Sussex County. Bicycling along Route 16, along a route parallel to US 113 (possibly on County Road 42 west of 113), the Queen Anne's Railway Line to Milton and the American Discovery Trail are being considered. Hiking should be emphasized along the Queen Anne's Railway Line. New sidewalks or multi-use paths should be developed along Old State Road and Route 16 between Old State Road and DuPont Boulevard.

Sidewalk placement issues will continue be addressed and corrected in the upcoming years. Funding to add new or renovate existing sidewalks was secured through Department of Transportation and the Town will continue to work with the Department and local

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legislators to secure additional funding for sidewalks and pathways. Another concept the Town will be exploring is that of boardwalk areas within the Swamp and Forest for access to nature. This would encourage use of the natural areas surrounding the Town for exploration of local species of trees, animals, and birds. Similar boardwalks exist in Slaughter Beach as well as in Little Creek just outside of Dover, Delaware.

As Ellendale grows in population and land area, the community envisions more pedestrian and bicycle friendly neighborhoods. Sidewalks and multi-use pathways will continue to be encouraged in new developments as a means of alternative transportation. Cul-de-sacs will be discouraged as the Town would like to have new development connect with its traditional small-town grid street pattern and continue the pattern in order to promote positive growth and interconnectivity.

### *Agriculture and Natural Resources*

As outlined below, Ellendale's setting in the Ellendale Forest and Swamp, its position on the Peninsular Divide between the Two Bays, its relationship to Delaware's natural environment is of extreme importance.

### **The Ellendale Swamp**

The central natural feature of Ellendale is the great Ellendale Swamp. From the 1938 publication, Delaware – A Guide to the First State:

"PICNIC-AREA, located on US 113 on the Northbound Side approximately 10 miles from Milford Boulevard (Route 14 in Milford) (fireplaces for cooking, firewood, and covered picnic tables) is on well-drained ground in the ELLENDALE SWAMP. The pleasant, shady site is maintained jointly by the Forestry and Highway Departments.

Though only 40 acres of Ellendale Swamp is State-owned forest, the 400- foot right-of-way includes strips of swamp and woodland cared for by the Forestry Department for the Highway Department. The state-owned strips of forest prevent the erection of any signboards along a 3-mile stretch of wild beauty, an avenue straight as an arrow bordered by pines, cedars, tall hollies, and a lush undergrowth of land and water vegetation. Altogether the Ellendale swamp and forest comprise about 16 square miles, one-fourth cleared or tilled.

Although the swamp contains no big game it is a favorite with naturalists; the plant and animal life that abounds here includes many species of birds and plants native only to the South; among the birds are the Prothonotary warbler and yellow-throated warbler, and among the plants are the muscadine grape, the swamp magnolia, and the white cedar. The prickly-pear grows in sunny patches of the dry woodland floor, mistletoe clings to high branches of hardwood trees, and wildflowers include several kinds of orchids.

Like most large fresh-water swamps, the Ellendale (38-52 alt.) is on the divide between two drainage areas. Part of the run-off eventually finds its way into the Nanticoke River and thence to Chesapeake Bay, and part flows eastward toward Delaware Bay. Ditching and the clearing of natural streams has dried up much of the swamp, improving nearby farmland to some extent but exposing former peat

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bogs to the danger of underground fires.”

### USGS Depiction of Ellendale’s Natural Resources

The portion of the Map 2 (Environmental Features map) shows the Town, forests, swamp, greenways, connecting waterways and wooded areas, illustrating both the hydrology and topography of the Town and Future Growth and Study Areas. This map also shows the extents of the two major watersheds and the tributaries and development centers within them.

### Natural Resource Mapping

DNREC has provided a series of GIS maps describing natural conditions within the Future Growth and Study Area.

**Map 2 (Aerial View)** shows the area of the incorporated Town, showing current municipal boundaries, waterways, ditches, parcels, roads, railroads, existing forested lands, and urban conditions superimposed over a 2007 orthographic photograph of the area.

Groundwater Recharge Areas of both excellent and good groundwater recharge capacity are depicted in **Map 3 (Environmental Features)**. Much of the Study Area northeast, east and south of the Town has good recharge capacity. Between Ponder Street and Us 113, along Route 16, lies an area of excellent and good recharge capacity. Other areas of excellent capacity include areas along Reynolds Pond Road, Route 16 east of Peachtree Orchard Road and south along Spicer Road.

Forested Areas are shown on **Map 3 (Environmental Features)** and shows the extent of forested areas in and around Ellendale. DNREC classified forested areas into those of more than 25 acres, those less than 25 acres and riparian forest areas in order to illustrate the extent of large forested “blocks” and riparian corridors.

Wetlands are also shown on **Map 3 (Environmental Features)** which shows the extent of wetlands in and around Ellendale. The wetland boundaries shown were developed by the Statewide Wetland Mapping Project. State law regulates stream disturbances. Federal law protects the wetlands throughout the community.

Riparian Buffers are shown on **Map 3 (Environmental Features)** which depicts the waterways, including ditches, within the Study Area and a 100-foot buffer along each waterway. DNREC recommends that riparian buffers of at least 100 feet in width be preserved when development occurs near a waterway. Riparian buffers provide important habitat and water quality benefits.

Sewer District limits can be seen on both **Map 4 (Growth and Annexation Areas)** and **Map 5 (Future Land Use)** shows the limits of the new Sussex County Ellendale-New Market Sewer District.

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Forest Legacy and State Resource Areas are shown on **Map 5 (Future Land Use)** and show the current boundaries of the planned Redden Forest Legacy area as well as current State Resource Areas. The Forest Legacy area has been identified by the State of Delaware for forest conservation through purchase of conservation easements or fee simple land acquisition under the Green Infrastructure and related programs. The State Resource Area boundaries include protected State, Federal, local, and private conservation lands and in-holdings, as well as planned additions. Implementation measures include state or non-profit purchase, purchase or donation of development rights and the establishment of agricultural districts.

### Ellendale's Unique Watershed Characteristics

Ellendale is nearly equally split between two distinct drainage basins. The Upper Nanticoke River Watershed, part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, is located on the northern portion of town. The Mispillion River Watershed, part of the Delaware Bay Watershed lies to the south. This means that all of the water on the northern end of town drains to the Delaware Bay, and all of the water on the southern portion of town drains to the Chesapeake Bay, making Ellendale a unique location in terms of water quality conservation practices. The Nature Conservancy, together with other conservation organizations, is pursuing an active conservation program for lands within the watershed. Lying between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay, the Nanticoke River weaves through the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula draining 725,000 acres of coastal plain landscape on Maryland's Eastern Shore and southwestern Delaware.

The Nanticoke is considered one of the most ecologically significant watersheds in the mid-Atlantic region. With a wide range of freshwater to brackish wetland communities, and several distinct upland communities, the watershed harbors a vast array of both rare and common species and unique natural habitats. Over 200 plant species and almost 70 animal species that are rare, threatened, or endangered have been documented in the watershed. Globally rare species (G3G4 or higher) include over 20 plants and 5 animal species. The watershed also provides important habitat for large numbers of migratory waterfowl and neotropical migratory birds and makes a **significant contribution to the ecological health of the Chesapeake Bay.**

The Delaware Bay Estuary includes the Delaware Bay, the Delaware River and the land that surrounds its tributaries – a total of 795 square miles in Delaware. Pollution and loss of wetlands are among the biggest problems facing the Delaware Estuary. Estuary means the place where the river mixes with the sea.

The Town will continue to work with local, State and Federal partners to promote protective regulations within the watershed.

### Agricultural and Forest Preservation

The Town of Ellendale is rich with history when considering the agricultural and forestry activities that have occurred and continue in the community. The Town will continue to preserve both vital industries and build upon its economic opportunities while preserving rural charm. To this end, the Town will work with Sussex County, the Delaware

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Department of Agriculture, and the Delaware Forest Service to achieve the following:

- Work with the Delaware Forest Service to develop protection measures concerning Ellendale's large, forested tracts to the southeast of town – often referred to as the "Ellendale Swamp." The Town will use both conservation easements and fee simple purchases to expand the Town's boundaries in order to direct growth away from this area of the community by drafting future regulations and ordinances restricting development.

### Urban and Community Forestry

The Town of Ellendale recognizes that new development brings changes to the landscape and directly impacts natural resources within and surrounding the community. As part of Ellendale's revised zoning code, the Town encourages the preservation of open space and the reestablishing of forest resources removed during the development process. These open space areas and newly planted street and forest trees are vital to the health of the community and the resident's quality of life. The Town is currently working with Tree City USA in order to obtain grants for planting and maintaining native tree species. The Town will also:

- Maintain the comprehensive natural resource/community forestry management plan which includes a tree inventory, review of open space resources and evaluation of public opinion while working toward an urban canopy goal.
- Explore options with University of Delaware Landscape Architect Program and others in this field of study.
- Continue to monitor wildfire danger to the community along the railroad. Continue educational outreach program within the town to minimize the danger of future wildfires and local fire hazards.

### Agricultural Preservation

In the 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Town of Ellendale defined a Study Area to consider the impacts of future development of lands west of US 113. The Town -- in cooperation with State agencies and their consultant -- performed this review and made the following recommendations to address the Department of Agriculture's concerns:

- The Town will work with the County to consider creating local Transfer of Development Rights Programs within Sussex County to preserve agricultural lands within the "Area of Concern" to lessen the impacts of future growth.
- Continue support of two voluntary programs for farmland preservation in Delaware. The **Agricultural Districts program**, which offers farmers 10-year agreements to keep their lands in farming use and in return receive lower assessments for real estate tax purposes; and the **Delaware Agricultural Lands**



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**Preservation Foundation program** in which permanent easements are created by the sale of development rights to the State.

### Wetlands

There are many wetland features within the Town and its future growth areas. In protecting these natural resources, the Town will review and amend its zoning code to include the following language to protect these resources when considering future development:

“Regulatory protection of wetlands is mandated under Section 404 provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act. Certain other wetlands (mainly in tidal areas) are accorded additional regulatory protection under Title 7 Chapter 66 provisions of the State of Delaware’s Code. Compliance with these statutes may require an Army Corps of Engineers approved wetlands delineation and/or official DNREC wetland jurisdictional determination.”

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### Total Maximum Daily Loads

The 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan referenced information on Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Controls (DNREC) efforts to reduce non-point and point source pollutants within the Delaware River and Chesapeake Bay Drainages, which have since been modified. The Town recognizes the importance of protecting water quality and has included the corrected information in this update at the request of DNREC:

Under Section 303(d) of the 1972 Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), states are required to identify all impaired waters and establish total maximum daily loads to restore their beneficial uses. A TMDL defines the amount of a given pollutant that may be discharged to a water body from point, nonpoint, and natural background sources and still allows attainment or maintenance of the applicable narrative and numerical water quality standards. A TMDL is the sum of the individual Waste Load Applications (WLAs) for point sources and Load Allocations (LAs) for nonpoint sources and natural background sources of pollution. A TMDL may include a reasonable margin of safety (MOS) to account for uncertainties regarding the relationship between mass loading and resulting water quality. In simplistic terms, a TMDL matches the strength, location and timing of pollution sources within a watershed with the inherent ability of the receiving water to assimilate the pollutant without adverse impact. A Pollution Control Strategy (PCS) specifies actions necessary to systematically achieve pollutant load reductions specified by a Total Maximum Daily Load for a given water body and must reduce pollutants to level specified by State Water Quality Standards.

The Town of Ellendale is located within the Cedar Creek and Gravelly Branch watersheds of the greater Delaware River and Bay and Chesapeake Bay drainages, respectively. As previously stated, the TMDLs assigned for each watershed must be met in order to meet the State Water Quality Standards.

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The following table presents the range of nutrient and bacteria reduction requirements for watersheds within the community of Ellendale:

**Table 2 TMDL Nutrient (Nitrogen and Phosphorus) and Bacteria reduction requirements for the Broadkill, Mispillion and Gravelly Branch watersheds**

<b>Delaware River and Bay drainage</b>	<b>Nitrogen reduction requirements</b>	<b>Phosphorous reduction requirements</b>	<b>Bacteria-reduction requirements</b>
Broadkill	40%	40%	75%
Mispillion	57%, 88% in Kings Causeway Branch	57%, 88% in Kings Causeway Branch	87%
<b>Chesapeake Bay drainage</b>			
Gravelly Branch	30%	50%	2%

To further support and assist DNREC with the protection of these water resources and to mitigate future pollutants the Town will consider the following actions as part of this comprehensive plan update:

- Review and amend if necessary existing codes to address impervious surface impacts, buffer requirements, open space uses and requirements for site plan review and submission.

### **Flood-Prone Districts**

The County Ordinance defines overlay district regulations called “flood-prone districts” as follows: To provide controls for land areas adjoining a stream, river, estuary, ocean, or other watercourse which have been or may be covered by the floodwaters of a one- hundred-year flood or be subject to shoreline erosion caused by a one-hundred-year flood.

These areas follow the contours of the national FEMA flood insurance maps. To reduce the risks of damage to property and personal safety by developing a floodplain overlay zone that will:

- Require that 100-year floodplains (and base flood elevations if determined by FEMA or a professional engineer and approved by FEMA) be shown on site plans.
- Require that buildings in new subdivisions, and other new buildings, be located outside of the 100-year floodplain whenever possible.
- If development or newly constructed buildings are proposed within the floodplain, require that the lowest floor of the building be elevated on a properly designed

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foundation so that the bottom of the horizontal floor supports are at or above the 100-year flood level.

- In all instances, require that the lowest floor level shall be at or above the level of immediately adjacent roads to allow positive drainage.
- Require that the inside crawl space floor of buildings constructed on crawl spaces be at or above the lowest outside grade.
- Require that all mechanical equipment, and HVAC components be located above the base flood elevation.

### Drainage

Surface water management and the development of a master drainage plan are key elements to addressing future growth within the community and are items that were not included in the 2004 comprehensive plan. Tax Ditch Organizations within the potential growth/ annexation areas for the town are the Ellendale Tax Ditch, Gravelly Branch Tax Ditch, Maple Marsh Tax Ditch, and the School House Tax Ditch. Along with tax ditches, that have an established right-of-way within the Tax Ditch Organizations, are a network of private ditches, without right-of-way, that convey surface water to existing tax ditches. Well-organized and maintained tax ditches provide the drainage conveyance framework that enables the area to have productive farmland and desirable residences.

Existing tax ditch rights-of-way should be protected from development encroachment to allow for routine maintenance and periodic reconstruction. Routine maintenance primarily consists of mowing ditch bank vegetation and the removal of small blockages. Periodic tax ditch reconstruction involves the removal of sediment from the ditch bottom to reestablish the original design grade. The removed sediment, referred to as spoil, is typically disposed of by spreading within the tax ditch right-of-way.

The Town will consider requiring buffers when land is converted from agriculture to urban uses as part of this update to assist in the following:

- Streams, tax ditches, and private ditches will require periodic reconstruction at intervals dependent upon the sedimentation load from upstream. Periodic reconstruction involves the removal of sediment from the ditch bottom to establish or reestablish a design grade. The removed sediment, referred to as spoil, is typically disposed of by spreading alongside the ditch within the tax ditch right-of-way. Tax ditch rights-of-way need to be unobstructed.
- Planting of riparian buffers should consider drainage maintenance. On private ditches, where practical, the buffers should be planted on the south and west side of the ditch to maximize shading. Trees and shrubs should be native species, spaced to allow for mechanized drainage maintenance at maturity. Tree and shrub planting in this manner will provide a shading effect promoting water quality while allowing future drainage maintenance. Trees should not be planted within 5 feet of the top of the bank to avoid future blockages from roots. The buffers as well as the channel banks should be planted with herbaceous vegetation to aid in the reduction of sediment and nutrients entering into the conveyance. Grasses, forbs and sedges planted within this buffer should be native species, selected for their height, ease of

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maintenance, erosion control, and nutrient uptake capabilities.

- The town should explore the practice of one-sided construction and maintenance of private ditches and tax ditches providing there is adequate room for maintenance. Work with the DNREC Drainage Program, Sussex Conservation District, and the Ellendale Tax Ditch, Gravelly Branch Tax Ditch, Maple Marsh Tax Ditch, and the School House Tax Ditch to ensure adequate tax ditch right of way is retained for the placement of spoil.

To further support the tax ditch system within the community the Town will consider the following additions to a subdivision ordinance:

- A 25-foot drainage easement for storm drains, 10 feet per side within subdivisions.
- Open channels within subdivisions require a minimum 25-foot drainage easement as measured from top of bank to allow maintenance access and/or reconstruction.
- Maintenance access along open channels should be dedicated open space.
- Swales within subdivisions would require a 25-foot drainage easement measured from the centerline of the swale, or the width of the swale, whichever is greater.
- Prohibit the routing of major storm water pipes through yards – or neighboring yards - within and surrounding a subdivision.
- Encourage the elevation of rear yards within subdivisions to direct water towards the streets where storm drains are accessible for maintenance.
- The Drainage Program requests a 15-foot side yard setback on all subdivision lots with a storm drain on the side. A 15-foot side yard setback will allow room for equipment to utilize the entire 10-foot drainage easement and maneuver free of obstructions if the drainage conveyance requires periodic maintenance or future re-construction.
- The Drainage Program requests a 10-foot drainage easement around all catch basins located on private property to ensure adequate room for maintenance.
- Any catch basin or swale placed in rear and side yards will need to be clear of obstructions and be accessible for maintenance. Decks, sheds, fences, and kennels can hinder drainage patterns as well as future maintenance to the catch basin or swale. Deed restrictions, building setback lines, along with drainage easements recorded on deeds, should ensure adequate future maintenance access.
- Have all drainage easements recorded on deeds and place restrictions on obstructions within the easements to ensure access for periodic maintenance or future re-construction.  
Future property owners may not be aware of a drainage easement on their property if the easement is only on the record plan. However, by recording the drainage

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easement on the deed, the second owner, and any subsequent owner of the property, will be fully aware of the drainage easement on their property.

- Drainage easements should be for the town and recorded as such. This gives the town the ability to hire a contractor for maintenance for the drainage conveyance.
- Tax ditch rights-of-way should be designated open space.
- Exempt tax ditch rights-of-way, riparian buffer areas, and storm water management areas from grass height restrictions to aid in the prevention of nuisance geese.

To further support DNREC's efforts to allow for proper drainage the following additions will be considered to the Town's Subdivision Code:

- The Town of Ellendale at the request of the DNREC Drainage Program will add definitions of maintenance access, buffer, vegetative buffer, riparian buffer, tax ditch right-of-way, and other such key words to the planning and zoning code.
- The town of Ellendale should develop a master drainage plan to identify existing open channels within the town boundary and within future annexation area as these channels may require maintenance in the future. The riparian buffers along the channels provide a multitude of benefits to water quality and wildlife. Most of the channels have trees and wetlands adjacent to the channel. There must be a balance between preserving the riparian buffer and having the capability to access the channel to perform maintenance.  
A recommended easement width of 25 feet from edge of existing tree line, wetland, or top of bank whichever is greater would allow such access. By identifying such areas now, future development would incorporate the easement into community open space thereby preserving the riparian buffer while allowing for channel maintenance access.
- Water bodies, ponds, intermittent and perennial streams, ditches should be buffered from development. Existing buffers could be enhanced, or new buffers planted to obtain 100-foot buffers on each side of the existing water conveyance. A minimum 50-foot tree and shrub planting on buffers with the tallest trees planted on the south and west side of the water conveyance will maximize shading of water. Trees and shrubs should be native species, spaced to allow for mechanized drainage maintenance at maturity. Tree and shrub planting in this manner will provide a shading effect promoting water quality while allowing future drainage maintenance. Do not plant trees closer than 5 feet of the top of the bank to avoid future blockages from tree roots. Plant the balance of the 100-foot buffer, as well as stream and ditch banks, with herbaceous vegetation to aid in the reduction of sediment and nutrients entering into water conveyance. Grasses, forbs and sedges planted within these buffers should be native species, selected for their height, ease of maintenance, erosion control, and nutrient uptake capabilities. Remove invasive vegetation prior to the planting of native species. The construction of pedestrian and bicycle paths within the outer 50 foot of the buffer should be encouraged.

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- Wetlands should be protected from development with a 50-foot vegetated buffer. Grasses, forbs, and sedges planted within these buffers should be native species, selected for their height, ease of maintenance, erosion control, and nutrient uptake capabilities. Remove invasive vegetation prior to the planting of native species.
- Designate all buffers for water bodies, ponds, intermittent and perennial streams, ditches, and wetlands as un-subdivided open space. No portion of any building lot should be within the buffers.
- Designate all wetland buffers as un-subdivided open space. No portion of any building lot should be within the buffers. During prolonged wet periods, the wetland buffers may become too wet for normal residential use. Designation as open space will aid in the prevention of decks, sheds, fences, kennels, and backyards being placed within the buffers thereby reducing nuisance drainage complaints.
- Existing woodland provides valuable wildlife habitat as well as soil erosion protection and water quality filtering. Preserve existing woodland within proposed annexation areas. Do not allow the clearing of woodland to create stormwater management areas. Develop a tree planting guideline, a tree mitigation planting guideline and woodland preservation language to protect the existing woodland from harvest after annexation.
- For new subdivisions, the developer's engineer should check the existing downstream conveyance and pipes for function and blockages prior to the town's approval of plans and annexation. The developer should notify downstream landowners of any change in volume of water released on them. The examination of downstream conveyance and notification to downstream landowners should not stop at the town boundary.
- Evaluate the existing drainage patterns within future annexation areas to ensure adequate drainage for the cumulative storm water impact upon full build out of the annexation area. The city should be mindful of potential storm water impacts from the town onto county residents.
- Explore the use of drainage ways and other open space set aside for drainage maintenance for bicycle and pedestrian interconnections in new developments.

### ***Economic Development***

There has been little growth in the number of employees locating in Ellendale. Those businesses that are present within the community are considered small business with less than 10 employees that provide a mix of service-oriented jobs to residents. Many of the residents within the community travel south to Georgetown or north to Milford for employment and a portion of the community travels east to work in resort communities in coastal Sussex County. The Town wishes to continue to promote economic development and expand community employment opportunities. The Town will consider the following as part of this comprehensive plan update:

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- Support existing local merchants in the community as well as the development of small businesses in the downtown area.
- Attract larger businesses along the DE Route 16 and US 113 Corridor and encourage service roads for proper access and traffic flow.
- Review existing zoning classification for community parcels that support new commercial and industrial businesses near existing railroad service.
- Promote proximity to Beaches, Georgetown and Milford with rapid growth including the new Bayhealth Sussex Campus with the new Hospital, A.I. DuPont services for children and other medical facilities on the campus.

### Land Uses

#### *Existing Land Use*

Existing Land Uses for the Town of Ellendale and the Greater Ellendale Area are presented on the Map 5. Existing Land Uses are described for the Town of Ellendale. The Existing Land Use map describes the following land use categories.

Agricultural-Natural Resources- Open Space – Land occupied by farms, farm buildings, and accessory farm businesses are shown throughout the Study Area. This use predominates in the northern, eastern, and western portions of the Study Area outside the Town limits. The Area is rich in prime agricultural lands. Limited low-density residential uses, in support of agriculture, also exist here. In addition to minor residential activities, these areas may contain natural resource areas of open, conserved, and undeveloped land, including forests, waterways, and the Ellendale Swamp.

Government, non-profit conservation organizations, or privately owned land. This land use is especially important in the Study Area because of the major presence of the Redden and Ellendale State Forests -- Delaware's largest state forest holdings -- and 1,000-acre Ellendale Swamp.

Residential (R-1) – Land occupied by primarily Single-family residential buildings used as dwelling units for households and families. Most of these dwellings are contained within the Town proper.

Residential - Business – All parcels located along North and South of Rt. 16 (Main Street) occupied by buildings or areas used for residential and or business. Some require special use. This includes one parcel located just off of Rt. 16 (Main Street) known as 104 Kings Alley, which is zoned R-B as well.

Residential Vacant – Land not in any active use in any of the purposes described above.

The Existing Land Use Map also shows property lines, railroads, the current municipal boundary of the Town of Ellendale and the Potential Growth and Annexation Area boundary.

Railroad Square - The Town and the greater Ellendale Area are centered on the intersection

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of the north- south rail line and Main Street (Delaware Route 16). It was and is the rail junction. In this square, there were a variety of railroad, business, institutional and residential uses in earlier decades. The pattern of Mixed-Uses characteristic of the nineteenth and early- twentieth century railroad and village environment is still present, although faintly.

Today, the “Railroad Square” area includes historic homes, late nineteenth century buildings housing stores and the modern Ellendale Trading Company. The Town Hall, The Fire Hall, Police Department, Town Park and U.S. Post Office, as well as the Ellendale United Methodist Church, are located along McCaulley and Washington Avenues just outside the Square.

Mixed Use - Mixed-use development is characterized by combining two or more principal uses (such as retail, entertainment, office, residential, lodging and civic/cultural/recreation) that are mutually supporting; pedestrian connections; and a plan that stipulates the type and scale of uses, permitted densities, and improvements.

Commercial – Industrial – Land occupied by buildings or areas used for convenience, specialty or general merchandise retail, service or office uses. Commercial use in the Study Area occurs at the intersection of US 113 and DE 16, and to lesser degrees at the intersections of DE 16 with Old State Road and DE 16 (Main Street) and East and West Railroad Avenues.

Land occupied by buildings or areas used for manufacturing, assembly, distribution and power generation. The property on the west side of the Norfolk and Southern Rail Line, north of Main Street, used by Delaware Coastal Railway is included in this land use category. Beach Highway and Old State Road is included in this category.

Institutional/Civic – Lands occupied by buildings or areas owned by government or non-profit institutions including municipal facilities, churches, and rectories, and used for public or civic purposes. This category includes the Town Hall, Town Park, U.S. Post Office, Ellendale United Methodist Church, and Fire Hall buildings in the incorporated limits. It also includes the properties of New Zion A.M.E., Shiloh A.M.E., and other churches in the Study Area. Day Care Centers and cemeteries are included in this land use category. The publicly owned Kent-Sussex Detox Center on Main Street is also included.

Utility – Public – These are lands used for a variety of public utilities services such as sewer, water, electric, etc.

Rights-of-Ways – Other – These are lands set aside to support the rail activities and other services that require lands to support the local economy and community infrastructure.

### ***Future Land Use***

The Future Land Use categories have been reviewed and changes were deemed necessary in this update. The Town will consider the development and implementation of these changes to address conflict land uses and promote and define land uses within the Town of Ellendale.



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Railroad Square - Expansion of the Railroad Square to include Town Hall, Town Park and other municipal buildings with public access and use.

Institutional/Civic - Re-examine the locations of institutions and civic use buildings.

R-2 – The Town will propose a Multi-family dwelling zoning to accommodate connected homes, garden style apartment dwellings and other permissible dwellings that do not exceed three stories: not inclusive of an underground basement structure if applicable.

R-3-

Commercial – Industrial - Divide these uses and establish a separate use for Commercial and a separate use for Industrial, making each a very clear land use within the municipality and around it's annexation zones.

### ***Zoning Ordinance(s)***

Through the past ten years, the Town has reviewed and revised its current zoning code to preserve the existing community while allowing for new development. The Town has completed the following tasks in support of the 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Plan:

#### **The town plans to:**

- Update its zoning code to address new development requirements and to allow greater open space potential.
- Will update the subdivision code to allow for mixed-use communities.
- Adopted the Sussex County Moderately Priced Housing regulations to support Town and County needs.
- Created environmentally sensitive development district overlay zones to protect natural resources.
- Developing historical preservation regulations to protect existing resources while encouraging redevelopment.
- Developing and amending the subdivision ordinance to allow for the inclusion of elements which support superior design techniques to preserve community character.

### ***Annexation Plan***

Directing Town growth in a fiscally responsible and environmentally compatible manner is a key objective of any comprehensive plan. The annexation plan directs this type of growth and identifies parcels as potential Town expansion areas should there be a mutual annexation interest between the Town and property owners. Since 2009, the annexation plan for the community has changed and will continue to explore annexation opportunities.

Town expansion is planned to follow existing sewer infrastructure, annex Forested lands in out of play areas, and encourage growth to the west of the Town with the addition of the Grade Separated Intersection along Route 113. The new growth pattern is more

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consistent with the interest of property owners adjacent to the Town boundaries who have expressed a desire to annex and will promote future development.

The future Growth and Annexation Map shows potential expansion areas, requesting annexation over the next five years as well as longer term (5 to 15 years) areas of interest for annexation for the Town.

Proposed zoning for annexation areas codifies Ellendale's plan to maintain/enhance its residential character with regional business development clustered around US 113 and State Route 16. A land use classification of Residential, Commercial and Agricultural will be proposed for the Phase One and Two annexation areas.

When considering future development projects in lands running north and south along US 113 and east of US 113, (between US 113 and Old State Road) there should be a greater emphasis on commercial activities with some element of residential activities possible. The Town believes that given its proximity to a major highway, larger commercial activities would be expected based upon previous growth activities in neighboring towns such as Milford and Georgetown. However, the Town does recognize that some locations may not be suitable for this type of development due to environmental and highway restriction or limitations. When this is the case, the Town will allow flexibility in the proposed development.

For all remaining lands east of Old State Road and other areas within the pre-existing East New Market Sanitary Sewer District, the Town will consider future development that is dominated by residential uses with only minor commercial activities to support residents in these new and existing developments. Residential planned communities allow for more clustered residential development and better conservation of natural resources and open space.

In addition to areas considered to be Phase One and Phase Two annexation areas, there are also areas of local interest that are identified as the Study Area in the Growth and Annexation Areas Map. The Town feels these areas would need special consideration of the impacts to the Town, should annexation be requested. Therefore, the Town would like these areas to be developed with mixed uses; however, they may cause significant environmental impacts. The Town would carefully consider the annexation of these parcels by weighing the economic, environmental and social costs and benefits to the Town. For this Study Area, Ellendale requests that any development proposals submitted to either the County or State be shared with the Town upon receipt.

### **Transfer of Development Rights Program**

The Town will continue to work with Sussex County and the State to encourage agricultural and forest land preservation and will work to direct residential and commercial growth near existing Town boundaries. Should a Transfer of Developments Rights Program be developed, parcel identified within Growth and Annexation Areas Map as Study Area could be used as a sending area to further preserve these lands and the rural character of the community. These preserved lands would enhance the value of future

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development and preserve some of the traditional rural landscape and agricultural and forest economies of eastern/central Sussex County.

A Transfer of Development Rights Program allows landowners to transfer the right to develop a parcel of land to a different parcel of land that is more suitable for growth. Simply, this program provides an option to farmers to preserve their land while appreciating its equity and directing growth toward town centers; this allows for the best fiscal investment of local resources such as fire, police, roads, and education.

The Town of Ellendale has a unique opportunity to promote the rich agricultural and forestry culture and history within the surrounding community. By working with State and County officials to develop and participate in such a program, Ellendale may continue to build upon existing and proposed open space lands surrounding the community. As the Town considers future annexations of large parcels into the Town as identified in **Map 7** (Growth and Annexation Areas Map), the Town should work with individual landowners to implement such a program.

The Town would also like to discourage sprawl within its boundaries. Urban sprawl is the rapid expansion of towns, often characterized by low-density residential housing, single use zoning, and increased reliance on cars for transportation. Urban sprawl has been correlated with increased energy use, pollution, and traffic congestion and a decline in community distinctiveness and cohesiveness. In addition, by increasing the physical and environmental “footprints” of metropolitan areas, the phenomenon leads to the destruction of wildlife habitat and to the fragmentation of remaining natural areas.

### ***Implementation***

To implement the 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update, the Town will consider the following ordinances or additional planning activities:

### **Housing and Land Use Objectives**

- Continue to participate with the Sussex County Moderately Priced Housing Program.
- Review existing subdivision code to encourage mixed-use design.
- Review existing land uses and encourage redevelopment of sites for new housing as well as new employers.
- View housing improvements and rehabilitation in all neighborhoods of Ellendale.
- Supplement redevelopment efforts for streetscape improvements as appropriate.
- Use of Community Development Block Grant and housing rehabilitation funds to improve housing conditions where they are most severe in Ellendale.
- Allow accessory apartment units in residential districts in its Zoning Code.
- Encourage housing designs with roof pitches and eave dimensions consistent with Ellendale's traditional architectural styles.
- Review and revise the Town's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and housing code to allow for cluster development, Mixed-Use development, Multi-family units and street tree planting.

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### Community Character and Historical Resource Preservation Objectives

- Work to preserve and promote the Town's historic architecture and the Town of Ellendale-Railroad Square Historic Area.
- Encourage creative adaptive reuse of historic structures.

### Intergovernmental Coordination Objectives

- Develop new partnerships for cooperation and coordination to address future land uses activities with nearby local governments and with Sussex County.
- Work closely with Delaware State agencies like the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC), the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO), DNREC and DelDOT in advancing The Town of Ellendale's goals.
- Develop a Town 5-Year Capital Improvement Program coordinated with the C.I.P. program of Sussex County and that of DelDOT.
- The Town will work with the County with the creation of a local Transfer of Development Rights Program within Sussex County.

### Environmental Objectives

- Participate with DNREC Drainage and Storm Water Section, Sussex County Government and other local jurisdictions in a regional storm water assessment.
- As the community continues to review and revise its local zoning codes and regulations, it should consider the need to provide for drainage and storm water concerns.
- The Town should encourage better design that allows for cluster development types that will allow for additional open space requirements that will continue to allow water to enter and recharge the local aquifers.
- Encourage the planting of trees and other landscaping features to further lessen water run-off from the site and retain water for future absorption into the aquifer system.
- Continue to partner and support the efforts of the DNREC Drainage and Storm Water Section, Sussex Conservation District and the local Tax Ditch Association to maintain tax ditch rights-of-ways, perform needed maintenance and maintain any manmade structures within these ditches.